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International Relations

Herbert Putnam, Library of Congress, Washington.

E. C. Richardson, Princeton University Library, Princeton, N. J.

Frank P. Hill, Public Library, Brooklyn, N. Y.

W. C. Lane, Harvard University Library, Cambridge, Mass.

R. R. Bowker, "Library Journal," New York City.

Bookbuying

The committee has not yet been appointed.

Bookbinding

A. L. Bailey, Wilmington Institute Free Library, Wilmington, Del.

Rose G. Murray, Public Library, New York.

J. R. Patterson, Public Library, Chicago.

Federal and State Relations

B. C. Steiner, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.

T. L. Montgomery, State Library, Harrisburg, Pa.

Demarchus C. Brown, State Library, Indianapolis, Ind.

Paul Blackwelder, Public Library, St. Louis, Mo.

C. F. Belden, State Library, Boston, Mass.

Thomas M. Owen, Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala.

W. P. Cutter, Library of Engineering Societies, New York City.

Travel

F. W. Faxon, Boston Book Co., Boston, Mass.

C. H. Brown, Public Library, Brooklyn.

J. F. Phelan, Public library, Chicago.

Co-ordination

C. H. Gould, McGill University Library, Montreal.

J. L. Gillis, State Library, Sacramento, Cal.

N. D. C. Hodges, Public Library, Cincinnati, O.

W. C. Lane, Harvard University Library, Cambridge, Mass.

Herbert Putnam, Library of Congress, Washington.

T. W. Koch, University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor.

J. C. Schwab, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.

Work with the Blind

Laura M. Sawyer, Perkins Institution, Watertown, Mass.

Lucile Goldthwaite, New York Public Library.

Mrs. Emma N. Delfino, Free Library, Philadelphia.

Mrs. Gertrude T. Rider, Library of Congress, Washington.

Julia A. Robinson, Secretary Iowa Library Commission, Des Moines.

Miriam E. Carey, Supervisor of Institution Libraries of Board of Control, St. Paul.

Program

E. H. Anderson, Public Library, New York.

H. C. Wellman, City Library, Springfield, Mass.

George B. Utley, A. L. A. Executive Office, Chicago, Ill.

COUNCIL**Meeting of June 24th**

The meeting was called to order by President Legler with 45 members present.

The Chair announced the death since the last meeting of the Council of Dr. John

Shaw Billings and Mr. Charles Carroll Soule, and by unanimous vote of the Council the Chair appointed Dr. Herbert Putnam, R. R. Bowker and H. C. Wellman a committee to draft resolutions to be presented to the Association at large.

Dr. Bostwick as chairman presented the following:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LIBRARY AND THE MUNICIPALITY

In presenting this final report, your Committee finds it necessary to consider and to give expression to two points of view, both of which are represented in its membership and neither of which can be neglected—one that believes that, owing to diversity of local conditions and of constitutional and other requirements in different parts of the Union, it is impossible to frame definitely a model library law or a model library section of a city charter, and the other, that without some such expression as can be given only in the form of a definite body of law of this kind, the recommendations of the Committee will necessarily be vague and will largely fail of effect.

Your committee has therefore thought it best in the first place to make a statement of the things that a library law or charter section should, in its opinion, aim to do, giving reasons where necessary; and in the second place to present a definite example of the way in which these things may be done, accompanied by a warning that before adopting it as a model in any specific instance, it should be carefully studied by some competent person and modified to suit the necessities of the case. Your committee realizes also that every state library law should contain provisions, such as those regulating the State Library and Library Commission, which do not fall within the duties assigned to this committee and hence are not touched upon in this report.

And first, regarding the aims of a library law:

(a) We reiterate our statement of last year that the library is an educational institution and that education is a matter of state rather than of local concern. If a state already has a good library law which has worked and is working well and satisfactorily to all concerned, local libraries should be left in operation under

the provisions of the law, precisely as the schools should be and generally are left, no matter what changes in the form of municipal government are contemplated or have been carried into effect. If the state law is not entirely satisfactory, it is better to amend it than to try to better matters through the local charter. The charter may well contain, to avoid the possibility of conflict, some such special disclaimer as the following: "Nothing in this charter shall be so construed as to interfere with the operation of the public library under the library laws of the state." If the library law contains provisions seemingly in conflict with new charter provisions, some additional definition may be necessary.

(b) Possibly we are not yet ready for compulsory library establishment throughout a state, but at all events it should be made simple and easy for any public taxing or governing body to establish a free public library and to tax itself for the support of that library, accepting gifts where necessary and obligating itself to fulfill the conditions under which these gifts are made. This would include municipalities, counties, townships, school districts, boards of education, etc.

The library should be assured of reasonable and sufficient financial support, either through the operation of a special-tax provision or by the requirement of a minimum appropriation by the authorities. In no case should the existence or value of the library be placed in jeopardy by making possible a capricious withdrawal or lessening of support by the local authorities.

(c) The library should be administered by an independent board of trustees, not by a single commissioner, and, in particular, not by a commissioner who has other matters on his hands. In case such grouping appears necessary, the library should be placed with other educational agencies and in no case treated as a group of buildings or a mere agency of recreation. The board should be a body corporate, distinct from other municipal organizations and departments, with powers of succession, power to sue and be sued, to acquire

and hold property, etc. The terms of its members should not expire all at once, so that reasonable continuity in policy will be insured. It should have power to take over and manage other city libraries, school libraries and, by contract, libraries in other municipalities or communities.

(d) The funds of the library, including those derived from taxation, bequest, gift, and library fines and desk receipts, should be at the board's free disposal for library purposes, including the purchase of land and the erection of buildings. They should be received and held by the municipal authorities, and disbursed on voucher, with the same safeguards and under the same auspices as those required for other public funds.

(e) The library should be operated on the merit system, in the same way that the schools are so operated—not by placing the selection and promotion of library employees in the hands of the same board that selects clerks and mechanics for the city departments, but by requiring that the library board establish and carry out an efficient system of service satisfactory to the proper authorities.

The board should have entire control of its own working force and should initiate its own policies, including selection of sites and planning of buildings, its librarian being regarded both as its executive officer and as its expert adviser, to whom the choice of methods and the management of details are naturally left. He should be present at meetings of the board and may serve as its secretary.

We regard as satisfactory any body of law that will accomplish the results aimed at in the following sections, which your committee does not regard as couched in legal phraseology. Before being used in any state its provisions should be worded by a competent person experienced in drafting bills for the legislature of that state.

Section 1

Any taxing body shall have authority to levy a tax, not less than ——— mills on the dollar, for the support of a free public

library within its jurisdiction, and such tax shall be levied if so ordered by a majority vote of all voters at a general election, on petition signed by ——— voters.

Any governing or taxing body shall have power to provide, by annual appropriation, for the support of a free public library, whether or not a tax is levied as above provided, or to enter into a contract for library service with another governing or taxing body or with a private corporation already maintaining such a library.

Section 2

Any library supported as specified in Section 1 shall be governed by a board of not less than five or more than nine trustees (appointed as the legislature may provide), which board shall have the powers of a public corporation and shall perform all acts necessary and convenient for the maintenance and operation of the library.

The board may receive gifts and bequests, acquire and transfer property, real and personal, sue and be sued. It shall manage all libraries owned by the city and may contract with other public bodies within and without the city, to render library service, adding to its number, if mutually so agreed, one or more representatives of such public body. The terms of the members shall not expire coincidentally. Any member may be removed by the appointing or elective power for stated cause.

Section 3

All moneys collected for the use of the library, whether by taxation or otherwise, shall be in custody of the city treasurer and shall be paid out by him on vouchers duly attested by the board and audited by the proper city authority.

Section 4

All employees of the library shall be appointed and promoted for merit only, and the board shall adopt such measures as will in its judgment conduce to this end.

Section 5

If a gift is offered to the library on conditions involving the performance of cer-

tain acts annually, the municipality may obligate itself to perform such acts, by ordinance which shall not be repealed.

Section 6

The Board shall submit an annual report of its work in detail, with its receipts and expenditures, to the tax-levying body.

Upon motion by Mr. Wellman it was voted that the above report be printed as a tentative report in the Bulletin.

Upon motion of Dr. Bostwick it was unanimously voted that the session of the Council on Thursday evening, June 26th, at which the topic, "The Quality of Fiction" is to be discussed, be thrown open to the members of the Association at large.

The Chairman called attention to the vote of the Council which was passed at the Asheville meeting in 1907, providing that privilege be given to members of the Council to reserve hotel rooms at the annual conferences in advance of the membership at large and stated that a number of members of the Association considered this action as undemocratic and as undesirable for the Council to continue.

Upon the motion of Mr. Thomson it was unanimously voted that this ruling be rescinded.

The following persons were appointed by the Chair as a Committee on nominations to nominate five members for the Council to be elected by the Council for a term of five years each: H. G. Wadlin, Josephine A. Rathbone, M. S. Dudgeon, Edith Tobitt, W. O. Carson.

Mr. Ranck presented a report of progress in behalf of the Committee on ventilation and lighting of library buildings and recommended that the Committee be continued, which recommendation, upon motion of Dr. Putnam, was adopted.

The report here follows:

Report of Committee on Ventilation and Lighting

June, 1913.

To the Council of the A. L. A.:

Your special committee on ventilation

and lighting can submit at this time only another report of progress.

After the meeting at Ottawa the matter of having laboratory and other tests made in connection with the technical and scientific problems was taken up with certain industrial organizations with a view to the possibility of having them, in the interest of scientific knowledge, make the necessary tests for us, at no expense to the Association. Objection developed against this line of procedure, inasmuch as it was feared that less confidence could be placed in such tests when the organization making them (or if the persons making them were in the service of such an organization) had a commercial interest in the results of the tests.

Accordingly the effort was made to have the tests made by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and also by the Russell Sage Foundation, both of which efforts failed. The matter was then taken up with the Department of Commerce, and we are hopeful that we may be successful in getting the national government to make these tests for us through the Bureau of Standards.

In the meantime the committee is continuing its investigations and experiments so far as the limited resources at its command will permit. In this further study the committee is strengthened in its belief reported a year ago to the effect that most of the ventilating apparatus now in use will have to be discarded as junk and that the whole art and practice of artificial ventilation will have to be entirely remodeled on a correct physiological basis, inasmuch as the present basis appears to be entirely incorrect.

We therefore recommend that the committee be continued for another year. If deemed advisable the committee could prepare a preliminary report of its findings for publication in the Bulletin of the Association. Such a report might be of immediate service to librarians.

As an indication of the committee's difficulties in this matter we may cite the experience of Prof. Brooks of the University

of Illinois who, after years of study and experience in illumination, feels less willing today to prescribe a lighting scheme than a few years ago.

Respectfully submitted,
 SAMUEL H. RANCK,
 C. W. ANDREWS,
 W. H. BRETT,
 E. H. ANDERSON,
 ERNEST D. BURTON,
 Committee.

Mr. Ranck made an informal statement regarding the irregular and unsatisfactory fire insurance rates which he had found many libraries of the United States were securing and recommended that this subject be investigated by the Council.

It was voted upon motion by Mr. Thomson that a committee of three be appointed by the chair to investigate the subject of fire insurance for libraries. The chair appointed as this committee M. S. Dudgeon, Chalmers Hadley and S. H. Ranck.

There being no further business the Council adjourned.

Meeting of June 26th

This session of the Council was conducted as an open meeting and was attended by many of the members of the Association at large. The president presided.

The nominating committee presented the names of Willis H. Kerr, Mary W. Plummer, Mary E. Robbins, John Thomson and Samuel H. Ranck for members of the Council for a term of five years each. Upon motion by Dr. Bostwick it was voted that the secretary cast a ballot for the election of these members, which was accordingly done.

The remainder of the session was devoted to a discussion of "The Quality of fiction," discussion being led by Dr. Horace G. Wadlin and Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick.

Dr. Wadlin spoke as follows:

The Quality of Fiction—I.

The question set for our discussion is not new. It seems to be always with us. By itself, I do not think it of much importance. It only becomes so as related to

the much larger question of the general purpose of the public library—what it is supposed to stand for in the community. All details of library policy revert to that, and the fiction question is, after all, a detail.

"The quality of fiction"—if I may paraphrase the words of a celebrated writer of it whose works still compete with the latest "best seller"—

"The quality of fiction is not strained. It droppeth like the gentle rain from Heaven.

It is, perhaps, thrice blessed;
 It blesteth him that writes, and him that
 prints and sometimes him that reads.
 'Tis mightiest in the mighty and—"

But I refrain from going farther. Beyond that point we reach debatable ground and I shall add nothing to the sum of human knowledge in that direction.

When your President asked me to open this discussion, he was kind enough to imply that the time had arrived when representatives of the larger libraries, at least, might speak with conviction on this question. And I suppose I was selected for the reason that the library for which I am responsible has, through circumstances not entirely within its control, acquired a reputation for ultra-conservatism in respect to purchases of fiction; a reputation for which it is entitled to little praise, if the result be thought meritorious and for which it should not be blamed if the results are condemned.

For it is well, always, to choose the good rather than evil in any line of action; to choose it, that is, because you love it. But, if you don't love it, it is fortunate that in the general plan of nature the good so surrounds us and hems us in, to say nothing of the consequences which follow the choice of evil, that, in any case, we can scarcely escape the choice of good.

With us in Boston, and I take it the conditions are not dissimilar elsewhere, the practical considerations of providing shelf-room for new accessions, of keeping the catalog within reasonable limits, the adequate provision for new books in other departments of literature, the constant in-

crease in our fixed charges due to the expansion of our work—these enforce the restriction of purchases of fiction within limits that may be deemed conservative, whether we particularly favor conservatism or not.

Therefore I speak with no pride of opinion based upon the policy of my own library, nor in criticism of the policy of others, nor with any hope of establishing a hard and fast rule. Criticism is frequently caustic and bitter. I would fain be persuasive and kindly. It is indeed my conviction that no invariable rule is possible on this matter or on other points of library policy. Certain principles hold, but the application of them must vary in different libraries, and must proceed in harmony with local environment. Any other course would result in a system, hard and mechanical, where it ought to be flexible, sympathetic and humane.

It is said that in some places it is necessary to placate public opinion by liberal purchases of light and harmless trifles, "bright and snappy" stories, "big heart-grIPPING" tales of the moment in order that the fountain whereon the library depends for its continued life may not run dry. If that be so, who am I that I should sit in the seat of the scornful, or pronounce judgment on my neighbor? Any librarian whose hand is thus forced has trouble enough without my adding to it with wild and whirling words. After all, such action is not without precedent—nay, we may go farther and say not without justification. Old Isaac Walton was not the first who angled successfully with a concealed hook, and he has his disciples in other than green pastures or beside still waters. But, speaking seriously, such bids for the popular approval that may result in enlarged appropriations have nothing to do with the quality of fiction, and carry no lesson for those in more fortunate circumstances, who are able to exercise a sane and untrammelled judgment.

Let us admit freely, that fiction as a branch of literature, is today important, not merely as a means of relaxation and

amusement but of inspiration and instruction. Whether or not that admission implies that a public library ought to provide an undue quantity of it is a question of logic, and to be logical when sentiment will more effectively carry your point is today fatal in the discussion of more weighty matters than the one we are now considering. There is, indeed, a form of printed matter even more frequently used than the novel for relaxation and amusement. I allude to that required in the great game of Auction Bridge, and one may gain instruction, perhaps inspiration from that, but public libraries so far ignore it. Although it has been suggested that a moving-picture annex, freely used by some millions to the same ends, might be profitably taken on, and unquestionably the suggestion has much to recommend it. At all events, that time may not be wasted in profitless controversy, I grant, at the outset, all that the most ardent advocates of fiction claim in its behalf.

And since it is asserted, that many persons will read nothing but fiction, and that such reading is especially adapted to put new life into the tired shop-girl, to illuminate the social gloom that shrouds the proletariat, by taking him into worlds as unlike his real world as it is possible to make them, and to put a little more vitality into the merchant overwrought by too strenuous pursuit of the elusive dollar, why question its importance as at once a tonic and a sedative, a general promoter of bright days and peaceful dreams?

Of course, though many think otherwise, it is not undeniably the business of a public library to act as a pharmaceutical dispensatory and to make persons read who might much better get a required physical stimulus in some other way. Mr. Dana some months ago put the reading of the classics into the limbo of out-worn tradition—put them perpetually "on the blink," if I may use language similar to that employed in fiction by Sewall Ford's popular hero—and Miss Corinne Bacon, in a brilliant paper which, if you have not read it, I commend to your attention, keenly

reminds Mr. Dana that it is not really necessary for any of us to read at all.

If, however, we dispute the unqualified benefits of fiction reading, it is the works of the masters which are used to overwhelm us—the recognized standard novels, quite modern some of them, for the production of good fiction did not stop with the death of Scott or Thackeray or Dickens—as if anybody questioned their influence or their power!

If I wished, on the other hand, to assume the role of Mrs. Partington, and seek to beat back the on-rushing tide of printed matter, all of which claims to be imaginative and romantic, I should need no better broom with which to attempt that forlorn and hopeless task than one made from the strands which Mr. Booth Tarkington, and others actively engaged in the production of fiction, supplied in the letters read from this platform Monday evening.

There is a trinity of things, frequently asserted, which I do not believe, that is, I do not believe them in my present state of mental development, though I trust I am still open to conviction.

First, I do not believe that everybody is entitled to receive at our hands the books they want, when they want them! I hear it put this way: The State or the municipality ought to provide any citizen who wants a book with the book he wants when he wants it.—A moment's candid examination will, I think, show that this is impossible, and it being impossible, we need not spend time in disputing the theory.

Second, I do not believe that we should buy the book of the day, and all the books of the day, irrespective of merit; or, as a critical journal once put it, "Buy the books the world is talking about—merit or demerit cast entirely aside."

The talk of the people, about the books of the day is, 99 per cent of it, if we may apply a quantitative measure to that which is immeasurable, pure gossip, fostered by more or less interested, or paid notices in the newspapers, and the reading of books which for the moment are made the

subjects of such gossip is of about as much real value to the average man or woman as was Mrs. A's inquiry after the health of Mrs. B's old man. Not that she cared anything about his health but the inquiry helped conversation. And when the book of the day rises above the plane of mere gossip its interest or value is frequently momentary. Two years ago, the cheerful idlers on summer hotel verandas were lightening the burden of persistent application to what, for want of a better term, is called "fancy work" by reading "The rosary." Last year, their affections were centered on "The harvester." This year—well, I refrain from advertising what is likely to be found there.

But surely most public libraries in these days of expanding opportunity, find it difficult enough to supply things which have higher civic promise in them, even in fiction, without stocking up extensively with that which is as evanescent as the foam on the wave.

Third, I do not believe—as some do—that the indiscriminate reading of fiction, even poor fiction, leads finally to the selection of better books. Once I thought so, and I know that my distinguished predecessor, Dr. Winsor, held that opinion. But, after some thirty years' intimate knowledge of a library (outside of Boston), not too large to permit the study of the peculiarities of individual readers, this seems to me delusive. If I wanted to promote good reading, I would not treat it as a pill to be sugar-coated. Good wine needs no bush.

Passing from the triad of things I do not believe I make one positive affirmation. Every public library should establish a standard. As a matter of fact, this is done now. For example, the works of Mr. Charles Garvice are seldom found on our catalogs nor those of Rev. Silas K. Hocking. These two among the most popular English novelists of our day, may be found on the shelves of the circulating libraries, and with several others almost equally well-known, appear among the miscellaneous attractions of the railway news counters; but not with us. Why? They are

clean, highly moral, in the accepted use of that word, and not without a certain literary merit. The answer to my query implies selection, in accordance with a standard.

I said some years ago on this subject, and have seen no reason to change my opinion, that while there are those who resent what they call "censorship" on the part of public libraries, nevertheless, simply because we are public institutions, we have responsibilities to the public, toward children, at least, and toward those of unformed literary taste.

Personally, I am not much afraid of the baleful effect of certain books usually condemned by moralists. Not every one who reads "The pirate's own book" will take to piracy on the high seas; and a quiet elderly lady of my acquaintance who reads rather more erotic French fiction than some would approve, still preserves, so far as I can see, modesty of demeanor, and, unless skilfully dissembled, an exemplary private life. I was myself, in my young days a persistent reader of Beadle's dime novels, which were of size to be readily concealed between Euclid and Andrews and Stoddard's Latin Grammar, well out of view of the censor. Oliver Optic was permitted to corrupt my young mind, and since I had an eclectic taste, I absorbed liberal doses of Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., Emerson Bennett, and Mrs. Southworth, writers almost unknown to the present generation. So far, I have escaped the penitentiary and the home for feeble-minded. But that does not justify the exposure of Burton's "Arabian nights" on open shelves, for which lapse of judgment we were once criticised by a reputable Boston paper, or prove that since life is short and art is long and one can not read everything, and some books are, from any point of view, better than others, judicious selection may not prevent lamentable waste of time.

Before selection is attempted, the amount available for expenditure should be fixed, and this should be determined by the income of the library and the proper relation which, within that income, pur-

chases of fiction should bear to other necessary expenses. The percentage will vary, I should suppose, with different libraries. Speaking for my own, it has by experience been determined at from 20 to 25 per cent of all expenditures for books. In a recent lean year, it dropped as low as 12 per cent, but in the last four years has ranged from 23 in 1912 to 25 in 1909. I include expenditures for replacements as well as for new fiction.

All theory apart, no more could have been spent without impairing the up-keep of other departments. As I have intimated, we are always confronted, to use Mr. Cleveland's phrase, by conditions rather than theories. I need not enlarge upon the character of those other departments. They are not for the use of the dilettante or the connoisseur. Contrary to an opinion that seems to prevail in certain quarters, we do not buy extensively, as one critical commentator put it, either "musty parchments or rare first editions in which not one person in 50 has the slightest interest or concern."

No. These departments provide for the scholarly use of a library which is at the center of a group of educational institutions accommodating probably 10,000 students. It is unthinkable to suppose that this work of education, of so much importance to our city, could go on without the aid derived from the library. And I need only mention the various special collections which have grown up from the beginning, which are drawn upon each year by students who come to us from abroad, and from which, on the inter-library loan plan, we lend annually to other libraries in the proportion of 1,200 to the 50 which we receive from them in return.

These phases of our work must be taken into account, just as similar considerations must be influential in any library, if a proper balance is to be kept of expenditures for fiction. And bear in mind that every dollar spent for fiction beyond the proper limit as set by a candid consideration of conditions and resources, no matter how insistent the demand—and it is well

known that the demand may be so insistent as to require, without satisfying it, all the money at your command—every dollar beyond this limit is a dollar drawn from students, from readers in courses, from work with the immigrant, if you have that problem, from work with children, from the artisan or mechanic who comes to you for the books that will add to his industrial efficiency, from your business men's branch, if one exists. The library cannot be made a mere depository for fiction. This should go without saying. It does not propose to include all good fiction in its purchases. The sum set apart can not all be used for new fiction, but must cover replacements. The library must also buy fiction in other languages than English.

As to the work of selection, I pass in rapid review our own methods, concerning which much nonsense has been written. We examine with care substantially every book in English that comes from the press, which any public library is likely to buy. Last year, which is perhaps typical, 890 different books in fiction were considered, including fiction for young readers. And every book was not merely examined by title, but was read and commented upon in our interest by at least 3 persons on the average.

Of course, no such thorough examination could be made by the library staff alone, and we have the services of a volunteer committee of readers not officially connected with the library. The committee does not supersede the critical opinion of the librarian or his selected staff officers. It does not even control. It merely aids by an analysis of the books and by such opinions, expressed on blank forms provided for the purpose, as show an outline of plot and treatment, and merits or defects as they appear, not to trained literary critics, but to average readers of some cultivation in different walks of life or on different social planes.

This committee was one of the excellent inventions of my predecessor, Dr. Putnam, and, shortly after its establishment,

it received wide attention from the press, for the most part based on complete misconception of its purpose and character. This resulted in creating an impression as different as possible from the actual, but which still persists, as the mother-in-law joke persists, or the young lady who plays the piano in the parlor while mother washes in the kitchen, or the stage Irishman and Yankee—stock material of the pseudo-humorists.

The genial "Librarian" of the Boston Transcript, who on Saturday is to tell you how to discourage reading, still has periodic visions of the "Censors of the Boston public library," just as more timid souls have created bogies out of Col. Roosevelt or other historic characters. But the committee has no power to "censor" anything, and the Boston public library has no "black list" nor has it in my time ever had to become a censor. It has to choose, and so far as possible within the exercise of fallible human judgment to choose wisely. It finds itself unable to buy some hundreds of as good books, perhaps better books, than it buys, but it censors nothing, being fortunately relieved of a duty from which I would myself not shrink in exigency, by the limitations surrounding its choice.

It is one of the curiosities of journalism, this rise of the legend of the Boston fiction committee. It started from a half jocose article wholly inconsequential, one would have thought, in a western paper from the pen of a little-known Boston space writer. Numerous excellent books not purchased were said to have been "tabooed," and the list went over the country like wild fire. None of them had been "tabooed," unless inability to buy is a taboo. Big head lines with Swinburnian fervor spoke of the "books banned in Boston." From the little daily papers, the matter spread to the big ones. The Times Saturday Review pointed out, after scanning some of the titles, that "in some New England minds exquisite pleasure was akin to wickedness," because of the supposed censorship of books not bought. The

committee was irreverently alluded to as the "body of spinster censors who since they were themselves virtuous had determined there should be no more cakes and ale." A critical literary journal feared that the committee desired "to form Boston's literary taste on too precious a model," and that since the majority of the readers were women, "the sense of power may have led them into arbitrary decisions." A New York paper, not unwilling to have a shy at Boston, said: "The committee takes an attitude untenable, Pharasaic, and what the enemies of Boston call Bostonese."

Harper's Weekly, a journal of civilization, expressed curiosity about the committee: "That the majority of them are young, we know, because they are not married. But are they red, white, or blue stockings? Do they approve of straight fronts? Do hoops still gallop in the East wind?" Drastic comments were received and appeared in print from other librarians. Mr. Legler's predecessor, entirely in good faith, fell with the rest. He said he had been told that in Boston they sent new novels to club women and received their opinions on slips of paper. He imagined that a good dinner would have something to do with such reports.

The St. Louis Globe Democrat had a word of commendation, although equally misled as to the grounds of praise. It said: "The literary lines are drawn as sharply and perhaps as arbitrarily as the social ones. Yet this New England trait of severe selection is a blessing to the country, and has leavened its crudeness from ocean to ocean. Puritanism has been more or less a critic of the rest of us, but the criticism has done good. * * * There is doubtless good reason for the rejections made." But the New York Sun which still shines for all, said: "The city was so terribly agitated over the wicked censorship of fiction at the library that the reading committee is doomed to become an extinct institution."

All of this is ancient history, and I only recall it as showing, in little, the growth

of a popular myth. The committee as an institution still lives. It has always been representative. As the Bookman once said of its lists of best sellers, so, in dealing with the reports, we are not under the impression that we are pointing solemnly to stupendous critical opinions. We do not even claim that every individual report is actually accurate and unbiased. But we do believe that collected and weighed, they are unbiased and accurate in the bulk. The committee in its membership is subject to frequent changes. It is, as I have said, free from library influence. Its members are appointed by the committee itself and we neither approve nor cancel appointments. At present there are 27 members, men and women, married and unmarried, (10 unmarried ladies comprise the spinster element), Protestants and Catholics, French, German, Spanish, as well as those to whom English is the mother tongue.

They are all fairly intelligent, not illiterate of course, but not offensively scholarly. They include artists and teachers, several literary persons, at least two authors of repute, a business man or two, two physicians, and so on. This analysis shows the representative character of the committee; that it is made up with breadth of selection. Its verdict is not conclusive, and aims to reflect only the opinion which readers of intelligence would form after careful reading. Other factors are always taken into account in determining whether or not a book shall be bought. Necessarily, many current novels approved by the committee are not bought. Frequently novels are bought which the committee did not approve. But the experience of several years has shown that nearly all which for various reasons we have found it impossible to buy have failed to demonstrate their right to live for even a few brief months. The demand for some of them was insistent for a short time. Now, their very names are forgotten. If we had purchased a considerable number of them, the money, so far as present demand is concerned,

would have been wasted. It may be fairly said, however, that we have bought meantime, so far as our resources permitted, a fair representation of the best fiction, that which is likely to remain in constant request. Our supply of standard English fiction is large, perhaps 50,000 volumes, and is constantly replaced as the books wear out. We are liberal in providing good fiction for the young. Were our funds enlarged, we could undoubtedly use a larger number of copies, especially in branch and deposit work, but, as I have made clear, we cannot expend a larger amount of our money in this way without impairing the growth of the library in other important directions. Whether or not you approve the method that we find helpful, some plan of selection must be adopted since choice is imperative.

Of course, it would be possible to buy two copies of 500 different books, or, as at present, perhaps 10 copies of 100 books; the expense would be the same in either case. But in the first instance the chances of a borrower getting a copy of any book selected would be much reduced in comparison with his chance of getting one under the more limited range of titles. Of course, also, under the first plan, the library would be free from the impression that many novels had been "banned," but the public advantage is greater under the present system.

I have already taken too long. If you find anything in our plan helpful, I shall be glad. At any rate, I hope I have done something to lay the ghost of unreasonable censorship which some of you may imagine hovers over the Boston public library. We have our faults in Boston, but not that.

Let me take a moment in summing up. Every librarian must determine for himself how much money he ought to spend for fiction, under his own local conditions, within his own resources. He should try to keep a proper proportion in this expenditure, not as measured in Boston or elsewhere but in that little corner of the earth where his own library is placed. This is

a personal matter, not one of invariable mathematical relations.

Having done that, he should establish a standard and select with reference to it. Not my standard—it may not fit the case—but his own. And this too, like most library functions, is a personal matter. It will depend largely on what the librarian is trying to do with his library. For a library should not be a dead thing. It should have a vital relation to the particular community in which it is placed, and fit it as the glove fits the hand. Through the books we circulate we are directly influencing the men and women we reach; not for their personal benefit or enjoyment only, or to satisfy only their individual tastes or desires; but that they may become better fitted for their civic duties, may become happier, more intelligent, more hopeful in their human relationships.

It is not the book that you give John Smith for the benefit of John Smith only, that counts, but the book that makes John Smith of greater benefit to the community. That sentence, which I quote in spirit if not in exact words from our colleague, Dr. Richardson, expresses the reason for being of the public library, the only justification for the maintenance of such libraries by general taxation. Whatever books contribute to that end are the books that should be bought.

There is nothing in the book itself as it lies on the shelf. It is neither moral nor immoral nor of any other intrinsic merit or demerit. "Three weeks," 12 copies of which a commercial circulating library in a small city near my home kept in constant circulation for a year, is as good as another in that inert position. But books in contact with the soul of humanity are no longer dead things. They have something of that vital quality which gave them birth, as Milton long ago said.

It is sometimes as much our duty to restrain readers as to stimulate them, and a large circulation per capita without regard to the character of the books circulated, is as apt to be a sign of the inef-

iciency of a library, as it is a thing to be emulated.

This is not a recital of platitudes nor does the subject call for beautiful phrases about the ideals of the librarian's profession. On the contrary, it concerns practical results in return for the tax-payers' money, which comes hard enough at best. It is no heart-breaking matter whether you buy and circulate 50, 60 or 70 per cent of fiction. If you bring your percentage down from 70 to 50, that of itself may not mean improvement. But it is heart-breaking if you fail to get the books best adapted to secure the results I assume you are trying to obtain and which you ought to obtain in your own community.

It may be that what Mr. Dana once facetiously called the "latest tale of broken hearthstones" is just the thing to give a fillip to the dormant sensibilities of your patrons—to make them sit up and take notice lest cracked hearthstones become fashionable in your vicinity. I do not know. But this I know. You should settle that point with your own conscience, and when you have settled it, go on, and do not apologize. In the long run your sins whether of omission or commission, will find you out. On the other hand, believe me, virtue in this field as in others, will bring its own reward, and the reward of virtue is about the only one any librarian can reasonably expect.

Dr. Bostwick was called upon to continue the discussion and spoke as follows:

The Quality of Fiction—II.

The two things that it is necessary to take into account in selecting literature are its form and its content. The former largely determines the literary value of a composition; the latter its practical usefulness. Poetry and prose are the two great basic forms into which all literature is divided. Narrative may be cast in either form and when that narrative is untrue we call it fiction. In the usage of most of us the word is restricted to prose. Fiction, therefore, is not so much a matter of form as of content, or rather of the quality of

content. Of two books telling of the lives of the same kind of persons in the same way the mere fact that one is true and the other not would class one as biography and the other as fiction.

Of what importance is the fact that of two bits of narrative, one is true and the other is untrue? That depends on the purpose for which the narrative is to be used. If we desire an accurate and orderly statement of facts, the true narrative is the only one of value. On the other hand, the facts, not of the narrative but incidental to it, may be true in the fiction and false in the biography. From the standpoint of the seeker of recreation, the fiction is generally, although not always, more interesting. The writer has the advantage of being able to create the elements of his tale and control their grouping, as well as regulate their form; and in addition he knows that he must be interesting to secure readers. Unfortunately, historians, biographers and travellers have generally too high an opinion of their functions as purveyors of truth to stoop to make it interesting.

As regards literary value, of course the mere truth or falsity of the narrative can have little to do with this; yet I believe, as a matter of fact, that fictitious narrative has literary value oftener than true narrative; for the reason offered above, that writers of truth consider it beneath their dignity to garnish it, like those fatuous dieticians who believe that so long as we take so much proteid and so much carbohydrate we need not worry over forms and flavors. Now I am supposed to be telling you about fiction and about the propriety or impropriety of including much of it in libraries, but I think you see that I am sidling toward the statement that I think we need not consider fiction at all, as fiction, in this connection. The reasons for rejecting fiction, when they exist, have nothing whatever to do with its being fiction, and would apply to non-fiction as well. If a biography purporting to relate the events in the life of Oliver Cromwell is full of errors, that is a reason why it should not stand on your library shelves. If a novel, pur-

porting to give a correct idea of life in Chicago, succeeds only in leaving the impression that the city is peopled with silly and immoral persons, that is equally a reason for rejection. If a history of the Italian Renaissance is filled with unsavory details, these might exclude it, just as they might exclude a novel whose scene was laid in the same period. The story of a criminal's life, if so written as to make wrong appear right, might be rejected for this reason whether the criminal really existed or not. A poor, trashy book of travel should no more be placed on the shelves than a novel of the same grade. And if our book funds are limited we can no more buy all the biography or travel or books on chemistry or philosophy than we can buy all the novels that fall from the press. I do not deny, of course, that any or all the reasons for rejection that have been adduced might be overbalanced by others in favor of purchase, and they might be so overbalanced in the case of fiction as well as in that of non-fiction.

In other words I should not buy a book because it is fiction, or turn it down for the same reason, any more than I would buy or fail to buy a book because it is biography or travel. I say I should not do this any more in one case than in another; I might want to do it occasionally in both. But I believe that the more we forget the mere issue of fiction versus non-fiction and try instead to draw the line between useful books and harmful ones, wise books and silly ones, books that help and books that hinder, books that exalt and those that depress, books that excite high emotions and books that stir up low ones—the sooner we shall be good librarians.

Following Dr. Bostwick's remarks the subject was thrown open to discussion by members at large.

The chairman said that at his request some very interesting facts had been extracted from the annual published statements in Publishers' Weekly, respecting so-called best books of the year. These statements showed that many of the books which were leading books of particular

years, ten, fifteen and eighteen years ago, had absolutely disappeared from the list of books which are now in current favor. Some of these books were found to be unknown to those who are now engaged in book selection.

Replying to the question as to the percentage of fiction of books bought by public libraries in Canada, Mr. W. O. Carson of London, Ont., stated that in his library the percentage of fiction ran from twenty to twenty-five per cent and he thought that was a fair average for other Canadian libraries. Mr. Carson said that the Ontario government bases the government grant on the amount of money expended on books and they give no grant on fiction if it exceed more than forty-five per cent of the amount expended on other books, so in the majority of the small libraries, they do not expend more than thirty per cent on fiction for fear of losing a government grant on anything that exceeds that amount. Replacements are included in this percentage.

Dr. Steiner said that a number of years ago Mr. Ranck and he prepared a paper on replacements and their attention was called to the very large proportion of expenditure for replacements which had to be used for fiction and that this was particularly noticeable in a library of some age, as in the case of the Enoch Pratt Free library of Baltimore. The speaker thought it should be borne in mind in connection with the purchase, whether the amount expended was mostly for current fiction, mostly for replacements, whether a new branch was being stocked or whether a library was being stocked which had not been sufficiently provided previously with standard works. The exact proportion of fiction in any one year should be governed by these three factors, if not by others. Dr. Steiner said that their library last year wore out in round numbers about 7,000 books, of which at a rough guess at least six-sevenths were fiction. They replaced about 5,000 books including most of the non-fiction books, leaving from 1,500 to 2,000 volumes in fiction which were al-

lowed to expire by limitation. In every case where a book wears out, the circulation department reports whether that book is regarded by them as being worthy of replacement and if the book be not a duplicate but is an original copy the recommendation is always brought to the librarian, who occasionally overrules the decision of the circulation department in the case of original copies, but so far as duplicates are concerned, the opinion of the circulation department is absolutely accepted.

Dr. Andrews said he had found it very useful in the work of selection to discriminate between those books the library does not intend to buy at present and those which it will not accept even as a gift, and that in fiction it might be especially valuable to have some line of exclusion. He asked whether the chairman or Miss Bascom could recall what is the proportion of comparison between the recommendation of the Boston book committee as read by Mr. Wadlin and that of the A. L. A. Booklist.

Miss Bascom replied that as she recalled it for 1912 of about 1,000 novels published about 140 were included in the Booklist, adding that she supposed that the greater number of the entire output were read.

The chairman said that from figures which he had caused to be compiled, it was found that in this country and Great Britain something like 80,000 titles belonging to the classification of fiction had been printed since 1882 in this country and 1880 in Great Britain. Mr. Wadlin said that the A. L. A. Booklist contained titles of fiction which the Boston public library had not bought simply because they could not, having bought other things instead. Local conditions govern their book selection to a considerable extent.

The question being raised whether librarians experienced any considerable pressure brought to bear upon them to purchase certain books, the opinion was expressed by Mr. Ranck, Mr. Wadlin and others that this pressure was not nearly so great as one might think would be the case, that those demanding the purchase of a certain

book were reminded that the library had a limited income and that the question of selection always had to be very carefully considered and that books not purchased were not necessarily excluded for any other reason than lack of funds.

Representatives of the library schools being asked to what extent the lectures given in library schools were intended to exert an influence either for or against the wide purchase of fiction, Miss Hazeltine of the University of Wisconsin library school, said it was their effort to teach the students to buy the best books with the money at their disposal—those of the best literary value—and to buy many duplicates of the best fiction.

Dr. Bostwick said that those libraries that have pay collections of duplicates ought to state whether their reports include the pay collections of duplicates or not and what relation this collection bears to the original copies. In St. Louis it is the tendency to buy rather a small number of copies of each work of fiction for regular use and put these books as far as possible into duplicate collections. The pay collection of duplicates in St. Louis varies very much. In three of the branches it has not even been begun, the librarians of these branches reporting that there is no demand for it. In two branches it is very popular and in the central library fairly so.

Dr. Hill thought it was not wise to give a smaller number of copies to the public for free use than to the department where pay is requested. It seemed to him that the public should have just as many copies of a book as those who can afford to pay one or two cents a day. In Brooklyn they give the same number of copies to the free circulating department as to the duplicate pay department. Dr. Hill said the Brooklyn public library last year spent for replacement, juvenile and adult, \$50,000 out of the \$80,000 which was spent for books, or something like 60 per cent for fiction both new and replacements.

The chairman said he was much interested in a statement printed in Collier's about two or three years ago in which was

enumerated the result of the publishing activities of the father of the present publisher, who started the line of inexpensive editions of Dickens, Scott and others of a similar character. It was noted in that summary that the firm had sold in this country seven million copies of the works of Charles Dickens and four or five million copies of Scott's works, not individual titles, but the complete works of those authors. This means of course that a surprisingly large number of the best novels by these writers must be in the homes of the people who use the public libraries and that these people use the libraries to supplement their own private collections. Consequently, no particular conclusions can be drawn as to the actual character of the reading done by these people from the fact that books they get from the public libraries are mostly the quality of fiction which is put out at the present time.

Mrs. Sneed said there was one rule for the selection of fiction which she generally gave to her library school class every year. This was the rule of Henry van Dyke: A book of fiction is really worthy to be bought if it has not given an untrue picture of life, if it has not made vice attractive or separated an act from its consequences. The speaker thought that if this rule was applied in reading one would not go so very far astray.

Mr. Bishop said he had been greatly interested in the last five years in the selections made by the public itself. The Library of Congress receives, of course, all the copyrighted fiction and places one copy at least of practically every book of permanent value upon its shelves. After the temporary agitation of the immediate advertising is over the public itself goes back to lines that are surprisingly good in every way.

Mr. Gould said that Mr. Dutton, the publisher of Everyman's Library, recently told him that he had now sold over one and a half million copies of the books in Everyman's Library, which was a good indication of the market found for standard works.

Mr. Jast, the English delegate, being called upon by the chair, contributed also to the general discussion, after which the session adjourned.

Meeting of June 28th

A meeting of the Council was called to order by President Anderson immediately after adjournment of the conference.

The following resolutions were received from the Government Documents Round Table and were read and adopted by unanimous vote.

The following resolutions were passed unanimously at the adjourned meeting of the Documents Round Table, Friday, 12:15 p. m., when the Special Committee on Resolutions, consisting of Miss E. E. Clarke of Syracuse University, Mr. H. J. Carr of Scranton, and Mr. H. O. Brigham of Rhode Island, appointed at the regular meeting on Thursday, reported as follows:

WHEREAS, The American Library Association desires to express the appreciation of its members respecting the efficient work that has been and is being done for libraries by the office of the Superintendent of Documents, nevertheless it recognizes the many hampering features that still control the issue and distribution of public documents. Believing that these features can be materially lessened, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That this Association approve and urge the early enactment of Senate Bill 825 entitled, "An Act to amend, revise, and codify the laws relating to the public printing and binding and distribution of Government Publications," now pending before the Sixty-third Congress; strongly recommending, however, that the parenthetical exception now included in the first proviso of Section 45 of said bill be stricken out so that the annual reports of departments shall not be treated as Congressional Documents.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, That this Association repeat its former recommendation urging that the text of all public bills upon which committee reports are made, shall be printed with the report thereon.

GEO. S. GODARD,

Chairman Documents Committee.

The following report was made to the Council by Dr. Andrews in behalf of the Committee on affiliation with other than local, state and provincial library associations.

Your Committee on affiliated societies respectfully report that they have proceeded in the way proposed and approved by the Council at its meeting in January. They regret that circumstances have prevented them from presenting a final report but they believe that substantial progress has been made.

In May the Committee sent to the presidents of the four affiliated societies the following letter:

"The Council of the A. L. A. has appointed a committee to formulate the relations which should exist between the Association and affiliated associations other than state, provincial, etc., in return for the privileges accorded them. The committee understand that this action was taken largely because one or two of the societies had expressed a desire to contribute toward the expenses of the Association. This desire was duly appreciated by the council, who felt that it would be well to take definite and formal action. The committee propose that hereafter these privileges shall not be extended to other than affiliated societies without formal vote of the council, except that the program committee will be authorized to do so for the first meeting of any newly-formed society. They propose to recommend, also, that the present provision shall be continued,—namely, that each affiliated society shall meet with the Association at least once every three years. They also expect to recommend that some contribution towards expenses be required, but wish that the manner and the amount of the assessment be determined after consultation with the societies, and have asked that I secure an expression of your opinion on these points. They would consider the amount suggested by one of the societies,—namely \$25.00, as a maximum. The grounds for such a contribution are evident, but it may be well to state them as follows:

"1. Participation in the special railway accommodations.

"2. Provision for rooms and meals at reduced rates.

"3. Provision of rooms and time for meetings.

"4. Participation in the activities of the meeting.

"5. Printing programs, announcements in the Bulletin, and assignment of 15 pages in the Proceedings.

"The cost of preparing for and holding a convention is about \$500.00, that of the

Bulletin and Proceedings, including editing and distributing, about \$1,500.00. Provision of hotel rooms and travel facilities is not a matter of money, but frequently involves disappointment to individual members who apply too late.

"As stated already, the committee have not agreed on any amount or method. They have considered a flat amount of \$15.00 to \$25.00, one dependent on the number of members in the society, who are not members of the Association, and one dependent on the number of such members who attend.

"Personally, I think the logical method would be a combination of the first and third, and suggest that there be an initial amount of \$10.00 or \$15.00 and an additional charge of 50 cents or 25 cents for each member attending who is not a member of the Association. Of course, this additional charge will not be asked for official delegates of libraries who are members.

"Kindly let me have an expression of your opinion on this subject at your earliest convenience and oblige

"Yours truly,

"(Signed) C. W. ANDREWS."

They have just now received replies from all and formal action has been taken by two. All, though perhaps with varying degrees of cordiality and readiness, recognize the justice of the proposed arrangement. There is quite naturally some variance in their suggestions as to the proper amount of the contribution to be made and the method by which it is to be computed. The committee desire to consider carefully these suggestions and to reconcile their variations as nearly as possible. They would like to discuss them in a personal meeting of the whole committee, as well as by correspondence, and hope that the winter meeting of the council will afford them an opportunity to do so, and to formulate a by-law for the consideration of council.

They therefore submit the foregoing as a report of progress.

For the Committee,

C. W. ANDREWS.

It was voted that this report be received as a report of progress and further consideration be referred to the mid-winter meeting in January, 1914.

Adjourned.